

Missing Blues

Underground Rivers

Long ago, waters of Illinois were banished
underground by muscle and mule, not by prophesy.
No longer any ripples, waves, glassy reflections. Slave
to gravity, your unseen energy works its dirty deed.
Silent thief of tomorrow's bread.

Singing the Blues

I stood bent in my usual gardening position—head downward, bottom pointed skyward—when I caught the flash of muddied blue. The bird alighted just feet from where I was laying down a row of radishes.

I gazed upside down, stock-still. A female bluebird, unassuming in her muted colors. Wearing a feathered gown in shades of buff and cinnabar, gray and light blue, she was a Da Vinci upstaged by the Monet of her partner's sky-blue jacket and rosy-red breast.

Slowly I unfurled, mesmerized by this shy bird. I had often sighted her atop the house my husband Jim had constructed and posted at the edge of my vast aspirational garden plot. Surely garden and nearby orchard would offer a bluebird family a proper buffet of mosquitoes, caterpillars and grubs.

This pair had spotted the vacancy sign and swooped in to turn house into home. The female alone does the nest-building, although the male may bring her a token pine needle or a few strands of horsehair pilfered from the neighbor's small herd.

Though usually wary, on this occasion the bird hopped closer, into the dark patch of my shadow, then halted. Gingerly I returned to tamping down the soil over the radish row. Minutes passed, and still the bird remained motionless.

It was as I traced carrot row with hoe that I witnessed my little companion topple forward, beak to ground.

For days her lonesome mate circled overhead, marking the passage and singing his lovesong.

Skyscape

Thirsty, I turn skyward for my blues. Sky blue,
indigo, sapphire, azure, rhythm and blues. Only
sick skies turn green. Fiery daysend skies burn
through numbness.

I read cloudy trimmings like tea leaves, forecasting
farmdays. I listen to ancient whispers of wind-swept
blurs, reminding me that my waterself is momentary;
my dust will one day be earthbound.

When skydrops fall to earth, the land breathes cool
smoke. I skywalk this dewy planet until sun
beams me home.